

and with such energy and activity as probably has never been paralleled. We should look with affection at the memorials that such a man has left,—and what could be a more delightful object than to see completed, according to his ideas, the magnificent building which gives the greatest lustre to his name?

The exterior of St. Paul's is tolerably well completed. There are some points which he intended, and it would be well if they had been completed; but it is not attention to the exterior that is so much wanted,—it is to the interior, which is in a lamentably deficient state, not only from the greater part of the decorations that were intended by him having been left undone, but because there has never been, since the building was concluded, a proper feeling of public spirit to maintain it in the state in which it should be kept. The Dean and Chapter have done a great deal: they have kept the building, in all essentials, in a sound and firm condition: the estates belonging to such a building are not large,—indeed, they are only sufficient just to keep the fabric in ordinary repair. That has been done; and the question now is one of decoration, which does not properly fall to them to manage, nor can they be expected to do so. It is a work, indeed, which might be done by an appeal to public liberality. We know that when the church was building, a tax on coals, to a great amount, was applied to the fabric, but that was stopped when the building was concluded in its main features, but not in its decoration. We now see, in the middle of the choir, an inscription to the memory of Wren, which is known to everybody.—"Lector, si monumentum requiris, circumspice." The modesty of Wren would at any time have made him shrink from such a motto; but it is almost an insult when the building in which it is put up is left in so unsatisfactory a state.

There has never, for the last 140 years, been so hopeful a time for bringing this subject forward as the present. What is brought forward here is for the purpose of inviting consideration as to the best means of proceeding,—firstly, to understand what is the fit and proper decoration of the building, and secondly, to carry in our minds the possibility of urging the subject on, and getting, if possible, the public interest excited in the matter. There is one very fortunate circumstance at the present time, more so, perhaps, than at any other. The authorities generally, of St. Paul's, have hitherto discouraged any attempt at moving in the matter (as many such bodies have); but now they are very desirous—most, if not all of them—that something should be done to put the building in a more satisfactory state as regards decoration. The Dean, especially, appears to have the well-being of the church more at heart than any of his predecessors since the time of Sancroft, who was dean in Wren's time, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.\* The present Dean of St. Paul's has kindly encouraged this attempt to bring the present subject before your notice. The main object to consider is what decorations are suitable to the building; and, in determining this, the views of Wren, so far as they are known, should be considered first, and should carry more weight than any others. I will therefore read several extracts which I have made from the *Parentalia*, and I shall be obliged to appeal to your indulgence if they are longer than they should be in an original paper; but the *Parentalia* is a work composed mainly by Wren's son, from his own documents, and finally published by his grandson; and therefore, though it is written of Wren, it is almost always Wren's own words that are used. In page 269, Wren writes a letter from France, which shows how much he felt concerned in the interests of art and manufactures:—"I shall bring you almost all France on paper, which I found, by some or other, ready designed to my hand, in which I have spent both labour and some money. Berrini's design of the Louvre I would have given my skin for, but the old reserved Italian gave me but a few minutes' view: it was five little designs on paper, for which he hath received

as many thousand pistoles. I had only time to copy it in my fancy and memory. I shall be able, by discourse and a crayon, to give you a tolerable account of it. I have purchased a great deal of *taille-douce*, that I might give our countrymen examples of ornaments and grotesques, in which the Italians themselves confess the French to excel. I hope I shall give you a very good account of all the best artists of France. My business now is to pry into trades and arts. I put myself into all shapes to humour them: 'tis a comedy to me, and though sometimes expensive, I am loth yet to leave it." This was in 1665, before the Great Fire of London. As soon as he returned, the subject of repairing Old St. Paul's, which had been long in an unsatisfactory state, was mooted. Inigo Jones had made some repairs to the building, which (excepting the portico) were not very good, it seems, even so far as construction was concerned; and they had come to ruin in Wren's time, that is, in 1665.

Wren proposed, in his repairs of Old St. Paul's, to build a cupola round the old tower, using the latter for fixing the scaffolding, so that he might first finish his dome and then take away the tower. Then he says, with a good deal of knowledge of what people would like, and what would encourage them to proceed:—"As the portico, built by Inigo Jones, being an entire and excellent piece, gave great reputation to the work in the first repairs, and occasioned fair contributions, so to begin with the dome may probably prove the best advice, being an absolute piece of itself, and what will most likely be finished in our time will make by far the most splendid appearance—may be of present use for the auditory—will make up all the outward repairs perfect, and become an ornament to his Majesty's most excellent reign, to the Church of England, and to this great city, which it is a pity, in the opinion of our neighbours, should longer continue the most unadorned of her bigness in the world." With regard to his wishing so much for a dome, it is plain that he had that in his mind for a very long time. Ely must have given him the most complete hints for the result which he arrived at in the present St. Paul's. The main feature at Ely is the extraordinary and happy arrangement of the vistas through the aisles, and through the great arches of the cupola, uninterrupted. That he did not hint at in the model first proposed, but that is one of the great beauties of St. Paul's. Wren's uncle was Bishop of Ely, and it is very likely that Wren was called there very often, and picked up many hints from that cathedral. He seems to have thought that a cupola was a great feature in a Protestant Church, and he always had in view the advantage of it to an auditory; and, unless I am mistaken, some attempt will be made to make his ideas useful in the present day.

After the fire, it became necessary to proceed to some real and thorough repair, if not re-edification of St. Paul's. The Dean and Chapter had endeavoured to patch up the old building, but had met with nothing but mischance, and it was falling into a state of utter ruin. Wren had advised them from the beginning that it must be pulled down, but they thought they could avoid that alternative. At last, however, Dean Sancroft was desired to write to Wren, and invite him to help them in making a new design. He had offered to make a design just suitable for a temporary purpose, but the Dean very happily thought something more might be done, and, in fact, he helped Wren in every way to forward the complete work as it is.

Most present must have seen the original model by Wren, now preserved in St. Paul's; but to any one who has gone into the model (for it is quite large enough to walk bodily into it, and look about it), it is evident that the general perspectives would have been unrivalled.

This design was to have consisted of "one order of Corinthian only," and there can be no doubt of its magnificence. Its effect among the high houses which now surround the church might not have been so good as that of the present building; but in Wren's time the houses were not so lofty. "Sir

Christopher Wren endeavoured to gratify the commissioners and critics with something colonial and beautiful, with a design antique and well studied, conformable to the best style of the Greek and Roman architecture. Some persons of distinction wished to see the design in a model. The surveyor complied with their desires as well as his own, and made a very curious large model in wood, accurately wrought, and carved with all its proper ornaments, consisting of one order, the Corinthian only. This model, after the finishing of the new fabric, was deposited over the Morning Prayer Chapel on the north side; where it is hoped, such public care will be taken that it may be preserved, and if damaged repaired, as an eminent and costly performance, and a monument among the many others of the skill of the greatest geometrical and architect of his time. Thus much is specified upon recollection, that the surveyor in private conversation always seemed to set a higher value on the design than any he had made before or since, as what was laboured with more study and success, and (had he not been overruled by those whom it was his duty to obey), what he would have put in execution with more cheerfulness and satisfaction to himself than the latter."

No doubt, this model has been much neglected, but it is also to be hoped it will not be neglected any longer. Wren's, as is well known, a very high value upon this design, and it is even said that when he gave it up he shed tears. The king, however, gave his warrant for building the church we now see, and from that time Wren very wisely resolved to make no more models for public inspection, nor to expose his drawings in public.

The Cathedral was begun in 1675. A little further on in the *Parentalia*, we find a kind of apology for the use of coupled columns. The magnificent effect of coupled columns in the Louvre and their equally fine effect in the entrance to St. Paul's, renders such an apology unnecessary; but Wren's words are always worth hearing:—"As the ancients shifted the columns of the portico for the better approach to one door, so at St. Paul's for the same reason, where there are three doors, the two side doors for daily use, the middle for solemnity, the columns are widened to make a more open and commodious access to each. Those who duly examine by measure the best remains of the Greek or Roman structures, whether temples, pillars, arches, or theatres, will soon discern that even among these there is no certain general agreement, for it is manifest the ancient architects took great liberties in their capitals and members of cornices to show their own inventions, even when the design did not oblige them; but when it did oblige them to a rational variation—still keeping a good symmetry—they are surely to be commended, and in like cases to be followed." He proceeded zealously to make the present structure as magnificent as the design permitted. And he makes the following observations upon it:—"The surveyor followed the *Templum Pacis*, as nearly as our measures would admit, having but three arcades in each of the bodies west and east, as there; but where there are no arcades, and next the dome, he has continued the whole entablature.

"Again, this temple, being an example of a three aisled fabric, is certainly the best and most authentic pattern of a Cathedral Church, which must have three aisles, according to our custom, and be vaulted, though it may not be always necessary to vault with diagonal cross vaults, as the *Templum Pacis* and hulls of the Roman baths are. The Romans used half-spherical vaultings also in some places; the surveyor chose these as being demonstrably much lighter (viz. two-thirds) than the other. So the vault of St. Paul's consists of twenty-four cupolas cut off half-circular with segments, to join the great arches one way, and which are cut across the other way with elliptical cylinders, to let in the upper lights of the nave. But in the aisles the lesser cupolas are both ways cut in semicircular sections, and altogether make a graceful geometrical form, distinguished by circular wreaths, which is the horizontal section of this cupola, for the hemisphere may be cut all manner of ways into circular sections; and the arches and wreaths being of stone carved, the spandrels between are of sound brick invested with stucco of crackle-shell-lime, which becomes as hard as Portland stone, and which having large planes between the stone ribs, are capable of further ornaments of painting if required. Besides these twenty-four cupolas, there

\* He was one of the nonconforming bishops, and so larger archbishop after the Revolution.